

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01725 291651Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 291610Z MAR 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7342
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AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 1725

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PLO LE MOPS UN
SUBJ: SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON

1. ON MARCH 29 EMBOFF MET WITH SAMIR SANBAR, SPOKESMAN FOR U.N. IN BEIRUT. SANBAR, WHO HAS HAD FREQUENT CONTACT WITH ARAFAT AND WHO PARTICIPATED IN ERSKINE'S MARCH 28 MEETING WITH ARAFAT, BELIEVED THAT FATAH WOULD TRY TO MAINTAIN A CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON "FOR THE TIME BEING."

2. SANBAR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NEITHER ARAFAT NOR Wafa HAD UNEQUIVOCALLY ENDORSED A CEASE-FIRE IN PUBLIC. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ARAFAT COULD NEVER DO SO BECAUSE OF POLITICAL RESTRAINTS WITHIN THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT. SANBAR NEVERTHELESS BELIEVED THAT ARAFAT AND FATAH WOULD IN FACT WORK FOR A CEASE-FIRE. SANBAR BELIEVED THAT SALAH KHALAF'S STATEMENT THAT THE PLO WOULD FIGHT

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ON WAS ONLY A WARNING THAT FATAH WOULD RESUME FIGHTING IF IT FELT IT WAS BEING TAKEN IN BY THE CEASE-FIRE.

3. SANBAR LISTED THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD LEAD ARAFAT TO CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS A CEASE-FIRE:

ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL;

TREATING ARAFAT AS A STATESMAN AND AS A MAN OF IMPORTANCE. (SANBAR SAID THIS WAS VERY IMPORTANT.)

TREATING THE PLO AS ONE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CEASE-FIRE.

4. SANBAR SAID THAT ARAFAT GENUINELY FEARED THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD USE THE U.N. TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO, E.G., THE OCCUPATION OF TYRE AND HASBAYA. FOR THIS REASON, U.N. OFFICIALS IN THEIR MEETING WITH ARAFAT HAD GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO ASSURE HIM THAT UNIFIL WAS A NEUTRAL PEACEKEEPING FORCE, NOT ONE WHICH WOULD "SEARCH AND DESTROY" PALESTINIANS.

5. TURNING TO UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT, SANBAR ALSO NOTED THE FOLLOWING:

ON MARCH 25 SIXTEEN NORWEGIANS ARRIVED, AND ON MARCH 28 FORTY-THREE ARRIVED. THE NORWEGIAN FORCE WOULD TOTAL 750 PEOPLE, AND THE BULK WERE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE ON APRIL 1-2.

SEVENTY-TWO FRENCH ARRIVED ON MARCH 29, AND A FRENCH BOAT BRINGING SUPPLIES WAS EXPECTED BY MARCH 30. NEPAL, BOLIVIA AND SENEGAL HAD PROMISED TO
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SEND CONTINGENTS. ALL THREE, HOWEVER, SEEMED HESITANT TO ACTUALLY DO SO, UNTIL THERE WAS AN EFFECTIVE CEASE-FIRE.
PARKER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMISTICE, POLITICAL SITUATION, LIBERATIION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT01725
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780136-0541
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780316/aaaaamqq.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4226febb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3175517
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON
TAGS: MOPS, LE, PLO, UN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4226febb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014